

## Giant restiad beats forest giant

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The annual favourite native plant vote has produced a clear winner for 2011. Bamboo rush, or giant wire rush (*Sporadanthus ferrugineus*) received the most votes, clearly beating kauri. *Sporadanthus ferrugineus* highlights many of the issues surrounding New Zealand's plants and ecosystems. Relatively new to science, this handsome and impressively tall restiad is now found only in the Waikato region because 95% of its wetland habitat has been destroyed

Thousands of votes were cast by plant enthusiasts from New Zealand and around the world with over 140 different species nominated. There were some newcomers to the Top 10 list this year including two liverworts as well as some old favourites like pohutakawa and ongaonga.

The results of the vote are on the Network website. The Top 10 species are:

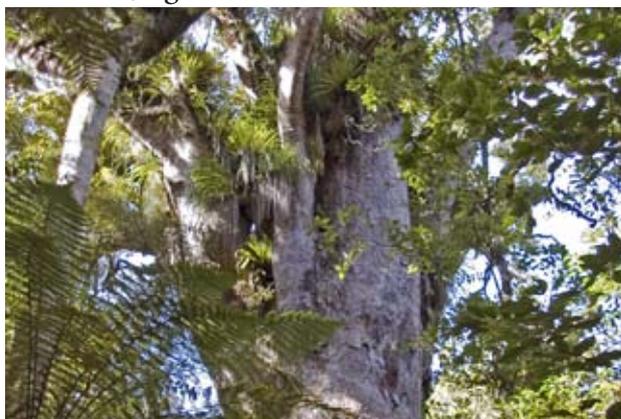
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### 1. Bamboo rush, giant wire rush, *Sporadanthus ferrugineus*



I fell in love with it after hearing a lecture about it. So I went out to see it and simply could not believe such a stunning plant had nearly been wiped off the face of the earth before anyone even realised it was a new species. – Margi

### 2. Kauri, *Agathis australis*



Kauri is an extreme plant. It can grow extremely big, extremely old and is extremely beautiful. It also has extreme effects on its environment that allows a suite of allied and unusual species to grow with it. – Bruce

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### 3. New Zealand calceolaria, *Jovellana sinclairii*



Well it seems to me that this delicate herbaceous shrublet has none of the obvious charms of great big trees like kauri, or pohutukawa or obvious iconic totems like cabbage tree—but it is every bit as special, if not more so because so few people even know it exists. It's also more threatened than people believe. – Dianne

### 4. Beach morning glory, *Ipomoea pes-caprae* subsp. *brasiliensis*



There is something decidedly funny about voting for a plant that scarcely makes it into your country – John

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5. Kirk's kohukohu, *Pittosporum kirkii*



I think it's important to vote for plants that are not well known and are highly threatened. – Kirsty

6. Ongaonga, *Urtica ferox*



Ongaonga is fiercely beautiful. It's also the host plant for kahukura the red admiral butterfly. – Kate

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7. Pohutukawa, *Metrosideros excelsa*



This tough and beautiful tree gets everywhere coastal and flourishes in the adverse conditions to act as a nurse for other plants and a nectar source for animals. Truly inspiring and a symbol of kiwi spirit. – Hayden

8. A liverwort, *Frullania wairua*



They never rate much mention, yet New Zealand has such a remarkable diversity of these minute jewels of nature. They are every bit as important as big trees, and yet so undervalued. This liverwort is incredibly small, so small you'd miss it unless you knew it existed, and that it what makes it special to me! – Anders

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9. A liverwort, *Lejeunea hawaikiana*



Because it's a liverwort and people ALWAYS forget about these amazing minute plants (also of course mosses and hornworts), which form such a critical part of New Zealand's ecosystems. – Anon

10. Surville Cliffs kohukohu, *Pittosporum serpentinum*



I like plants that grow in odd places. – Caroline

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It is great reading through the comments people have included with their votes. A consistent theme was voters' concern about the threats facing the species they nominated and a desire to raise awareness of these interesting, and often lesser-known, members of our unique flora. Other reasons given by voters included: the plant's association with a special place or person, the fact that the plant is local and iconic for an area, the plant's beauty or scent or because it is fascinating to study.

Despite being a national icon for our sports teams, the silver fern has never featured in the Top 10, not even this year after the rugby world cup win. However, one voter managed to work rugby in to his vote explaining that he voted for golden speargrass because the area Ritchie McCaw comes from is called Hakataramea, 'Valley of Dancing Speargrass'. To see the full results of the vote and learn more about the plants that were nominated, visit the New Zealand Plant Conservation Network's website: [www.nzpcn.org.nz](http://www.nzpcn.org.nz)

Using the Network's system for making your own books that is available on the website, a booklet of the Top 10 has been made. To download it, click on the link below:

[www.nzpcn.org.nz/publications/NZPCN\\_Favourite%20Plant%202011-web%20version.pdf](http://www.nzpcn.org.nz/publications/NZPCN_Favourite%20Plant%202011-web%20version.pdf)

**Note:** the file size is 1.6MB.